THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) 15 Projects in Nepal are under implementation or under consideration for execution with Indian assistance.

(b) Indian aided Projects along with the estimates are given below. These Projects are fully funded by Government of India :

(Rs. in crores)

	Project	Cost
1.	Sirsiya Bridge at Raxaul (since completed)	3.50
2.	Rajbiraj Industrial Estate (since completed)	2.12
3.	B.P. Koirala Institute of Health Sciences Project at Dharan	88.00
4.	22 Bridges on Kohalpur Mahakali Sector of East-West Highway	55.00
5.	Supply of Iodised Salt for Goitre Control	9.96
6.	Lumbini Project	3.44
7.	Hetauda Museum	3.68
8.	Expansion of Shree Panch Indra Rajya Laxmi Maternity Hospital	1.00
9.	Broadgauging of Birganj-Raxaul rail link	13.00
10.	Greater Janakpur Development Project	50.00
	New Projects	
11.	Expansion of Bir Hospital by 200 beds	28.00
12.	Koshi-Bharada Road	7.00
13.	Embankment along Bagmati, Kamala, Khado and Lalbakaiya rivers	41.00
14.	Biratnagar-Rangeli-Bhadrapur Road	260.00
15.	Birpur-chatara Road	17.00

(c) There is a constant endeavour to strengthen and diversify bilateral relations with Nepal. In the past year, high level visits have been exchanged between the two countries. The External Affairs Minister visited Nepal in January 1996 followed by the visit of Prime Minister of Nepal to India in February 1996 and the visit of the Foreign Minister of Nepal to India in August 1996. During these visits an extensive exchange of views and a detailed review of bilateral relations took place.

In August 1996, the High Level Task Force (HLTF) met in New Delhi to have a project-wise review of economic relations between the two countries. The major ongoing project being implemented with Government of India assistance include the setting up of a medical college and institute at Dharan, and the construction of 22 bridges on the East-West Highway in Western Nepal. Further additional locomotives and coaches have been supplied to strengthen services on the Jayanagar-Janakpur railway sector. Work on surveys for outer ring road at Janakpur, broad-gauging of rail link between Raxaul and Sirsiya, as well as other Projects have been initiated. During the visit of the Prime Minister of Nepal to India in February 1996, the "Treaty concerning the integrated Development of the Mahakali River including Sarada Barrage, Tanakpur Barrage and Pancheshwar Project" was concluded. This Treaty envisages implementation of the concerned Projects jointly by India and Nepal. These Projects on completion would yield significant benefits to both countries. Steps are already underway to follow up on the necessary activities to commence implementation of the various Projects. In addition, a liberalised trade regime to enhance bilateral commercial exchange in general and Nepal's exports to India in particular, is being facilitated.

MFN Status to India by Pakistan

3473. SHRI BIJOY HANDIQUE : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Pakistan has taken any effective steps to accord the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) Status to India;

(b) whether Pakistan has laid down a condition that India opened up her border; and

(c) whether Government have met opposition from security agencies on this point?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL) : (a) Pakistan has not yet accorded Most Favoured Nation status to India.

(b) Government has not received any proposal from Pakistan regarding India opening its border as a condition for Pakistan granting India the MFN status.

(c) Does not arise.

[Translation]

Branches of Indira Gandhi National Open University

3474. SHRI DATTA MEGHE :
SHRI BRAJ MOHAN RAM :

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :

(a) the places where the branches of the Indira Gandhi National Open University are located;

(b) whether some more branches are being opened; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?